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achieving the organisation's goals. Both cultures need to move—and are moving—towards a more trusting relationship that is based on a shared vision and on shared goals of better outcomes for patients and communities, within limited available resources. This partnership is a critical factor in quality improvements reported in New Zealand studies.^{1 2 7}

Clinical leadership is playing a key role in this partnership. But clinical leaders, although appointed by management, remain clinicians. They have not crossed to the “other side.” They are being helped by the rela-

tively new Clinical Leaders Association of New Zealand.^{1 2} Through clinical leadership, the New Zealand health system may be implementing what the sociologist Eliot Freidson calls the “third logic,” an alternative to market or bureaucratic models.⁸ In contrast to the failings of these models, a new professionalism may be emerging—but with clinicians becoming collectively and professionally accountable for both the quality and cost of their decisions, in a new and successful form of clinical autonomy.

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Kaiser Permanente: a propensity for partnership

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Fifty years ago, the belief that physicians and managers could effectively share responsibility and accountability for overall performance of health systems brought the wrath of the American medical establishment down on the first generation of Permanente physicians, who were excluded from their local medical societies. Then, the hard work of making such a partnership succeed nearly destroyed Kaiser Permanente in its first decade.

The outcome became the key to the success of Kaiser Permanente today, as well as one of the organisation's most distinctive characteristics: an organisational culture that transcends the traditional conflicts between “medicine” and “management.” That culture has been nurtured over decades of continuous negotiation by hundreds of committees and leadership councils that jointly manage the organisation on a daily basis. Today, the mutual commitment to an exclusive partnership between the physicians and management is deeply ingrained in the organisation. Many factors may be credited for this success, but three stand out.

Joint leadership—From the earliest days, leaders of physicians and management within Kaiser Permanente have acknowledged their mutual dependency. Having this propensity for partnership explicitly modelled at the highest levels of the organisation has guided behaviour at all levels, including frontline care givers and their counterparts in management.

Alignment—Without an explicit mutual alignment of mission and strategy, the partnership would have collapsed amid the traditional gaps between medicine and management. Most of the highly fragmented, dis-

aggregated healthcare structures in the United States suffer from just this condition—conflicting incentives and goals among physicians, insurers, and hospital administrators. Physicians focusing solely on patient care and administrators focusing solely on use of resources and productivity are destined for collision. Bringing both sides into a mutually interdependent relationship, where the success of each side is in the hands of the other, forces a powerful alignment of interests that transcends professional or cultural differences.

Management training for physicians—It makes no sense to send managers to medical school, but there are good reasons to train physicians in management or at least those on a leadership track. Collaboration and cooperation, negotiation and persuasion, and delegation and teamwork are just some of the critical skills in the management of large and complex organisations that are lacking in the training and development of physicians. If physicians are to work as truly effective partners in the management of their practices they need to take the time to acquire these skills, either through in house training programmes or at outside educational institutions. At Kaiser Permanente a range of such programmes ensures that physician leaders now understand both the bedside and the boardroom and make competent partners for similarly well trained managers.

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